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*Clearwater..*

**NATIONAL FOREST**

***INFORMATION***



U.S. DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE

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## CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST

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### HISTORY

The earliest history of the Clearwater Forest is connected with what has for many years been known as the Lolo trail. This trail, established by the Indians and extending through the Bitterroot Mountains from the Weippe Prairie to Lolo, Montana, has an interesting and colorful history.

Over this trail Lewis & Clark traveled during September, 1805, to the mouth of the Columbia, almost perishing from hunger and fatigue. As they struggled over these steep mountain, through dense forests on a trail covered with windfalls, the expedition came near to failure. They had killed little game and were reduced to a diet of horsemeat and soup. After days of extreme hardship and privation they arrived sick and exhausted at an Indian camp on the Weippe Prairie.

Due to the expert guidance of three Nezperce Indians, their return trip in June, 1806 was less difficult, though it was far from easy. By forced marches over snow packed so hard it supported their horses, they made the trip from Weippe Prairie to Lolo, Montana, in seven days.

Numerous stories and historical accounts have been written of this journey. Several of their camping places are marked by signs on the present road which, in a general way, follows the old Lolo Trail.

The next party of record over this trail was that of John Work of the Hudson Bay Company in 1832. He traveled eastward with a party of 50 to 60 trappers and Indians and they, too, suffered severe hardships while crossing these mountains.

During the fall of 1854 Captain Mullan crossed the Bitterroot Mountains by way of the Lolo trail while seeking a pass for a transcontinental railroad. It took him eleven days to cross from Lolo to the west side which indicates there was little improvement in the old Indian trail. When Captain Mullan was later in charge of building a wagon road from Fort Walla Walla east to Fort Benton, Montana, he followed a northern route.



In 1860 gold was discovered at Pierce by Captain Pierce's party. Following this, prospectors spread out and thoroughly prospected every major stream in the Clearwater National Forest. Mining boomed where rich placer ground was found in the Pierce vicinity. Gold was discovered at old Moose City in 1869, but it had a short life. All that remains of this old town now is washed gravel, leveled-off sites of houses, mining ditches, and three graves. Even the names of those buried there have been forgotten and trees have reclaimed the once cleared areas.

It is possible the Lolo trail was used by the early miners in penetrating the forest wilderness in search for gold, but no records of their travels have been left.

In 1866 the Federal Government recognized the value of the Lolo trail as a short route from the mining areas in North Idaho to those in Montana and appropriated \$50,000 for its improvement. Between 1866 and 1868 Major Truax with a military party surveyed and greatly improved the Lolo Trail, making many changes in the route of the old trail. Long sections of the trail followed by Lewis & Clark were re-routed and grades eased by grading from one saddle to another.

In the summer of 1877 Chief Joseph led his branch of the Nezperce Indians in retreat across the Lolo Trail with General Howard and the U. S. soldiers in hot pursuit. What an extraordinary sight it must have been to witness the long cavalcade filing over the narrow mountain trail. First came Chief Joseph with 250 warriors, followed by about 450 women and children, who were driving some two thousand ponies stretching approximately four to five miles. Several days later came General Howard with infantry, cavalry and artillery. Small wonder that in places the Lolo Trail is worn knee deep.

Upon creation of the national forests the Forest Service took over this old trail, improving it and making further changes. An automobile road, constructed in 1934, follows in a general way the old route through the mountains. Signboards mark some of Lewis & Clark's camps and other historical points, but they are few and much is left to the imagination of students of history.

The land comprising what is now the Clearwater National Forest was originally a part of the Bitterroot National Forest with field headquarters at Grangeville. Later the Bitterroot was divided into two units with the headquarters of the Clearwater unit at Kooskia, Idaho. The present

Clearwater National Forest was established as a separate forest in 1911 with headquarters at Orofino, Idaho, and Charles A. Fisher was appointed the first Forest Supervisor. Other supervisors were:

Richard Hamilton  
L. G. Hornby  
Paul A. Wohlen  
E. H. Myrick  
W. W. Coleman  
R. A. Coster  
L. F. Jefferson  
Percy E. Melis  
Edward F. Barry  
Fred Stillings  
Ralph Space

In the severe fire years of 1910, 1919, 1929 and 1934 large areas were burned over, primarily due to the inaccessible nature of the forests. No roads existed until 1921 when a road was built to the Bungalow Ranger Station, and it was not until 1933 that expansion of the road system under the CCC was started. Even today an adequate road system is the forest's greatest need.

Great as the losses due to fire have been, their overall effect on timber production and national economy was not as great as the introduction from Europe of the disease known as White Pine Blister Rust, first discovered in Idaho in the Browns Creek locality by Mrs. Ted Peterson in 1923. Since that time it has spread to every white pine stand on the forest. Many stands of young white pine were wiped out, leaving only the less valuable species. White pine can now be grown only with large expenditures of funds for control of the disease.

### ITS RESOURCES

#### SOIL

Soil is one of the basic resources and is just as important to the forest in production of timber, forage, game, etc., as it is to a farmer in production of crops. The Clearwater National Forest is blessed with a deep rich soil, capable of producing heavy stands of timber. Unfortunately, this soil is very easily eroded. Special care must be taken in building roads, skidding logs, and grazing stock to prevent washing away of the soil in large quantities.



## WATER

Water is another of the basic resources. Without it life cannot exist and if it is present in inadequate quantities, a wasteland is apt to result. The Clearwater National Forest has an adequate supply except for an occasional dry July and August. One of the vital concerns of the forest is the maintenance of a clean, pure supply of water. The name of the forest was no doubt coined from the streams which flowed at the time of the Lewis & Clark expedition.

As yet there are no water power developments within or adjacent to the Clearwater National Forest, although water from it is used by the power developments on the lower Columbia. Proposals are now being studied which have to do with constructing power dams on both the North Fork and the main Clearwater Rivers. Should these dams be constructed, they will utilize a part of, but not all of, the power potential of the Clearwater National Forest.

## TIMBER

The net area of the Clearwater National Forest is 1,102,695 acres, of which 653,000 acres are capable of producing commercial stands of timber. The non-commercial area lies within the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness area, or is made up of lands too rocky, at too high an elevation, to produce commercial timber.

The land capable of producing commercial stands of timber is divided as follows:

Commercial-size timber	191,000 acres
Young growth and non-stocked	462,000 acres

The young growth and non-stocked are largely the results of the fires of 1910, 1919, 1929 and 1934.

It is estimated that the Clearwater National Forest supports the following volumes of timber:

Western White Pine	1,709 MM
Ponderosa Pine	31 MM
Other	1,881 MM
Total	3,621 MM

The calculated sustained annual yield of the Clearwater National Forest is 100.8 million board feet. The forest has never reached this cut chiefly because of the inadequate road system. However, the cut has been climbing steadily



and in 1953 it was 34,498 M board feet, divided as follows:

Western White Pine	21,477 M
Ponderosa Pine	626 M
Douglas-fir	1,887 M
Larch	550 M
Spruce	1,485 M
Cedar	4,530 M
Grand Fir	3,443 M
Total	34,498 M

If all the Clearwater National Forest lands capable of growing timber were producing at maximum capacity, it is calculated that there would be an annual sustained yield of 283 million board feet. Of course, this will not be possible until the present large stands of young growth reach maturity.

#### FORAGE

The Clearwater National Forest is so heavily timbered that grazing of domestic livestock does not run into large numbers. The estimated carrying capacity for a season of about 3 months is 1,250 cattle and 13,000 sheep. Cattle grazing is chiefly confined to natural meadows and sheep grazing to high open mountain country. The estimated capacity of the cattle range is fully utilized by the stock of 24 permittees. Sheep range on the forest is almost inaccessible and there is only one sheep permittee on the forest. He enters the forest from the Montana side.

#### WILDLIFE

Wildlife is plentiful on the Clearwater National Forest and is a valuable economic as well as recreational resource. The estimates of game kill for 1953 are:

	<u>Estimated Number</u>	<u>Legal Kill</u>
Black Bear	780	80
Grizzly	5	0
Deer	2,000	290
Elk	6,800	1,700
Moose	110	0
Mountain Goat	440	0
Total	10,135	2,070

In the management of wildlife, the Forest Service cooperates with the State Department of Fish & Game and the Fish & Wildlife Service, assisting in law enforcement and the

collection of data on game population and condition of winter ranges.

According to figures taken from the state checking stations in 1953, about 5,300 hunters entered the forest and harvested 2,070 animals, which indicates a high percentage of successful hunters. To accommodate the hunters there are 14 commercial packers furnishing pack and guide service. The majority of hunters have their own packstock.

One of the most difficult game management problems on the Clearwater National Forest is the distribution of hunters. Due to the inadequate road system, large areas of heavy game concentrations are hunted very lightly while other areas are over hunted.

### RECREATION

It is estimated that about 25,000 people visit the forest annually. The Clearwater National Forest thus provides recreational opportunities to a large number of people and this use is increasing. Fishing and hunting are the chief recreational uses, but many visitors come to camp, travel the trails, and enjoy the scenery.

The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness area has a total acreage of about 1,870,000 acres of which 161,000 are within the Clearwater National Forest. This area contains no roads, travel being limited to foot and horseback. The visitor enjoys camping and travel under primitive conditions.

### OTHER INFORMATION

#### FIRE CONTROL

Fires have burned over large areas of the Clearwater National Forest and fire control is and probably always will be a major activity on this forest. The average annual occurrence is 132 fires, an average of six being man-caused and the remainder lightning caused.

The control of fires requires a sizeable organization of men, equipment and packstock. Eleven lookout stations are manned during the fire season and additional fire detection is provided by airplane patrols. At each ranger and guard station men and equipment are ready to go at a moment's notice to any fire. If the fire is in an inaccessible location, smokejumpers may be called from Missoula.

## ORGANIZATION

To handle the work of the Clearwater National Forest a yearlong force of 45 employees is maintained. This force is increased by about 300 temporary employees during the summer months. Additional firefighters are recruited for large fires.

The supervisor's office is located in the Federal Building in Orofino with ranger headquarters at Pierce, Lochsa, Bungalow, Kelly Creek and Canyon Ranger Stations.

## IMPROVEMENTS

To carry on the work of protection, administration and to make it possible to utilize the forest's resources, it is necessary to construct and maintain roads, trails, telephone lines, buildings and camp grounds.

The forest has the following improvements:

386	miles roads
814	miles telephone lines
1,590	miles trails
2	landing fields
12	lookouts
73	buildings at ranger stations
83	buildings at other stations
10	public camp grounds

## BLISTER RUST CONTROL

Since the introduction from Europe of the disease known as White Pine Blister Rust, it has been necessary for the Forest Service to protect young stands of White Pine on federal, private and state-owned timberland.

Protecting stands of White Pine from this disease is quite costly when placed on a per acre basis so it is profitable to protect only the best stands. The present program includes 16 working units on the national forest with a total acreage of about 54,000 acres. There are also 10 units on state and private land totaling 69,960 acres.

As old stands of timber are cut over, the number of units and the acreage should be increased.

It now requires a force of about 150 men during the summer months to fight this disease. These crews also serve when needed as fire fighters.



## NATIONAL FOREST RECEIPTS

The National Forest receipts for the Clearwater were the highest of any forest in Region One for fiscal year 1954. They were as follows:

Timber Sales	\$746,185
Grazing	2,795
Land Use	312
Power	5
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	\$749,297

Twenty-five percent of the gross receipts of all national forests located in Idaho are forwarded annually to the Governor for distribution to the counties in which forest lands are situated for the benefit of public schools and public roads. The receipts come from the sale of timber, grazing fees, land use permits, and other uses of the national forests. For the fiscal year 1954 (July 1, 1953 - June 30, 1954) the payments to counties embraced by the Clearwater National Forest were as follows:

Clearwater	\$114,148
Shoshone	7,085
Idaho	66,090
Total	<hr/>
	\$187,323

These three counties receive payments from other national forests located within their boundaries, so that the total funds received by them from national forest 25 percent payments were as follows:

Clearwater	\$121,906
Shoshone	148,180
Idaho	242,679
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	\$512,765



